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ABSTRACT

The study determined the causes for the high dropout rate of Chicano students in Nampa School District 131. In the spring of 1976, a questionnaire was designed and administered to 17 male and 23 female Mexican Americans who had dropped out within the last 5 years (1971-76) and who resided within the school district's boundaries. The questionnaire included questions regarding the respondent's personal history and attitudes toward school. Respondents' names were obtained from school personnel, the Nampa Bilingual Program Home Coordinator, the director of the GED (General Education Development) program, and personnel from the Migrant Education Resource Center and the Boise State Talent Search. Results were tabulated according to mean, range, and frequency. Findings included: educational level of the respondents' parents appeared to be low; 14 felt the teacher/counselor was not interested in them; 19 felt they were not free to talk over problems with a teacher/counselor; loss of interest ranked high as a reason for dropping out; more prejudice was felt from teachers than from students; the majority had average grades at the time of dropping out; and frequently cited was the need to work since the family income was extremely low at the time of their dropping out. (NQ)

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AN ANALYSIS OF SOME OF THE CAUSES
OF THE DROP OUT RATE OF MEXICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS
IN NAMPA SCHOOL DISTRICT #131

Rosa Delgadillo Reilly
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October 1976

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OF THE DROP OUT RATE OF MEXICAN-AMERICAN STUDENTS
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Many Mexican-American students have not achieved academic success within the traditional educational structure as it now exists. The fact that the Mexican-American child comes from a socio-cultural background which differs from that of the white middle-class world is often not appreciated by educators and those who design the educational structure.

An equal education has been promised by virtue of the "melting pot." But one of the victims of this system has been the Mexican-American, who in the majority of cases, has not yet assimilated. According to Litsinger (1973):

The Mexican-American student is a challenge because he has qualities which result in specific educational and personality needs. He is unlike Anglos and other minority students, and he differs from students of similar economic status who have culturally different backgrounds (p. 2).

Along with facing a new foreign language (English), many Mexican-American children must start their educational process also facing a new culture with values and expectations which differ from those which have been their lifestyle prior to starting school. If there is no positive reinforcement of the Spanish language and Mexican culture, the child may develop a negative self-concept.

To develop a positive self-concept Mexican-American children must be continually reinforced. They must achieve

levels of success with stimulus to continue. If the child's self-concept is not positively developed, the school experience may be one of continual failure and consequent frustration. This process results in no learning--the sum total of negative reinforcement. Felker (1974) has stated:

The all-pervasive nature of the learning and development of a self-concept makes helping children to see themselves in a positive manner one of the primary tasks of the teacher. Everyone wants children to grow up to be competent and to enjoy learning to use these competencies in life.

Simply because the learning of self-concept goes on all the time, adults fail to give attention to it and do not go about structuring experiences so that a positive self-concept is learned by the young. Few persons purposefully try to make a child feel incompetent, unworthy, or unloved, but these attitudes and learnings are frequently communicated. This occurs when adults let themselves forget to give attention to what is being taught about the self (p. 122).

The educational structure geared toward the white middle-class student cannot handle all of the special needs of the Chicano student. Traditionally, Chicano children have been expected to exhibit American middle-class values, traditions and orientations when participating in an instructional activity. It was not always taken into account that the instructional program was a constant and that the characteristics of the learner was a variable which proved the necessity for flexibility and needed adaptability.

A high drop out rate among Mexican-American students is one of the symptoms of the problem created by this system geared toward white middle-class children. According to

Peña (1975), "On a national scale, only 47 percent of young Mexican-Americans between the ages of 25 and 29 have completed four years of high school. This compares to 82 percent for all other races combined in the same age group" (Garcia, p. 7).

Statement of the Problem

There appears to be a high percentage of drop outs among Mexican-American students in the Nampa, Idaho School District #131. According to the Project Proposal for Assistance from Title VII of the E.S.E.A. (Bilingual Education) School District #131, May 1976, during the school years 1971-1972 and 1973-1974, 20 out of 119 Mexican-American high school students enrolled dropped out before finishing the four years. This was a 17 percent drop out rate. During the school year 1974-1975, 13 out of 88 Mexican-American students enrolled dropped out. This amounted to a 14.8 percent drop out rate.

The purpose of this study was to determine the causes for the high drop out rate of Chicano students in Nampa School District #131 through the development and administration of a survey instrument.

Significance of the Problem

The United States Office of Education, National Advisory Committee on Mexican-American Education (1968), reports the

following:

The average Mexican-American child in the Southwest drops out of school by the seventh year. In Texas 89 percent of the children with Spanish surnames drop out before completing high school.

Along the Texas-Mexico border, four out of five Mexican-American children fall two grades behind their Anglo classmates by the time they reach the fifth grade.

A recent study in California showed that in some schools more than 50 percent of the Mexican-American high school students drop out between grades ten and eleven (p. 1).

The high drop out rate among Mexican-American students is not only of national significance, but also of great importance to School District #131 and specifically to the Bilingual Program.

With the help of the Elementary-Secondary Education Act Title monies, the district is working to assist the culturally different student reach his/her fullest potential. By looking at possible causes and results of dropping out (which are examined in this paper), the District may be able to draw some further conclusions which may be implemented in the future.

Procedure

In order to determine some of the possible causes and results of dropping out among Mexican-American students in District #131, the following procedure was carried out.

1. Research regarding drop outs among Mexican-American

students was explored.

2. A population of Mexican-Americans within the District who have dropped out of school within the last five years 1971-1976, was determined.

3. An attitudinal survey administered orally to a selected sample of the determined population was designed.

4. The findings of the survey, along with a review of the available research, were presented to School District #131 and the Bilingual Program.

Limitations of the Study

Those interviewed were limited to a number which were surveyed within the allowed time, those living within the boundaries of School District #131, and those who agreed to participate.

The sample size was limited by several factors. The writer had some difficulties in obtaining names of persons who met the criteria established for the study.

Names were obtained from the following sources:

1. Lists of drop outs from Nampa High School from which all Spanish surnames were selected

2. A junior high school counselor

3. Interviewees often provided names of other drop outs

4. The home liaison for the Nampa Bilingual Program

5. The director of Talent Search at Boise State University

6. Lists of persons attending G.E.D. classes at the Nampa Community Center from which Spanish surnames were selected

7. Personnel from the Nampa Migrant Education Resource Center

Due to the time frame, it was not possible for the writer to make more than several attempts to contact a person at a given address. Some of the determined population had married and acquired new names, thus making it difficult to trace them.

Definition of Terms

Mexican-American. Americans of Mexican descent born and usually reared in the United States.

Chicano. One explanation of this term is that it was derived by dropping the first syllable of Mexicano and pronouncing the "x". This term will be used interchangeably with Mexican-American throughout this paper.

Culture. Culture is used in this paper as defined by Yang (1957), "All learned behavior and complex man-made forces by which people express themselves. This excludes environment and biologically inherited characteristics" (p. 7).

Value. Value is used in this paper as defined by Lit-singer (1973):

Values involve the individual's beliefs concern-

ing the world and his position in it. They are often generalized ideas closely related to group norms. Sometimes they are almost an unconscious assumption people make about the appropriateness or inappropriateness of ideas and actions. Values, therefore, have a universal referent and a judgmental character. Most important, values generate attitudes and, finally, actions (p. 32).

Self-Concept. Self-concept as used in this paper is defined by Felker (1974), "Self-concept is a unique set of perceptions, ideas, and attitudes which an individual has about himself . . . is the sum total of the view which an individual has of himself" (p. 22).

Assimilation. Assimilation is used in this paper as defined by Litsinger (1973):

It may involve accommodation of individual behavior in ways that are acceptable to dominant mores . . . it is assumed that the individual will modify or replace his cultural attributes with those of the dominant culture (p. 5).

Acculturation. Acculturation is used in this paper as defined by Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936):

Acculturation comprehends those phenomena which result when groups of individuals having different cultures come into continuous first-hand contact, with subsequent changes in the original cultural patterns of either or both groups (pp. 149-152).

Bilingual Education. Bilingual education as used in this paper is defined by Anderson and Boyer (1970):

Bilingual education means the use of both English and another language--usually the child's mother tongue--as mediums of instruction in the schools. It is not "foreign language teaching" but rather the use of each language to teach all of the school curriculum.

Bicultural or Cultural Pluralism. This refers to more than one culture. In this paper it will refer specifically to the Anglo and Mexican-American cultures.

Drop Out. An individual who left school before high school graduation and who did not receive his/her diploma with his/her graduating class.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Introduction

Over a period of years there has been much research concerning the drop out phenomenon. For the purpose of this study, literature was reviewed which had a particular relationship to the drop out problem in general and to how this problem involved the Mexican-American student in particular.

In order to adequately review much of this research, the writer examined educational journals, books, theses, Idaho Department of Education reports, lectures, and Title VII (Bilingual Education) proposals. In addition to the library information, the Educational Research Information Clearinghouse (ERIC) files of the Idaho Department of Education were reviewed.

This paper is divided into two sections. The first section reflects some of the causes and results of dropping out and how this relates to the Chicano student.

The Drop Out Phenomenon

The history, scope, and progress of education have advanced to such a point that society and the educational institution are becoming concerned as they are constantly confronted by the drop out. As education becomes more sophisticated and "relevant," the existence of the drop out

appears to be a paradox. It is a paradox because in reality education is not really meeting the needs of all the students as it purports to be doing.

In referring to the early part of the twentieth century, Robert D. Strom (1965a) stated:

There was no public concern about whether a drop out would constitute a social liability since the transition from education to employment was a smooth one with over half the available jobs requiring few if any skills and little or no academic preparation (p. 25).

According to Daniel Schrieber (1965a):

One major reason why the past was not confronted with a drop out problem is that there generally existed an at least adequate demand for low-skilled and unskilled workers, a demand that people of low educational background--drop outs--readily filled (p. 149).

In 1976 education is faced with a many-faceted task. E. Paul Torrance and Robert D. Strom (1965) maintain that "the school has changed more than any other institution in our time. In response to the knowledge explosion, there have been innovations in curriculum, methodology, materials, organizations and teacher preparation" (p. 129).

If students are still dropping out in spite of the fact that the educational system is attempting to become more sophisticated and relevant, what might be going wrong? Robert D. Strom (1965a) has some interesting observations concerning the need for relevant directions in education.

Before the potential drop out can realize his appropriate educational opportunity, certain views must undergo alteration. Popular acceptance is needed

for a concept that allows quality to occur within a framework of quantity. "Presently quality is viewed solely as academic rigor and as such necessarily is confined to those whose intellectual prowess has been demonstrated. Adherent to this limited view of quality finds expression in schools around the country which perpetuate a restricted, formalized curriculum that was appropriate in the nineteenth century when only the so-called "cultured few" were represented in secondary schools. When one prescribed then that "everybody" should study certain subjects, everybody meant anybody who was somebody, but today the term everybody is coming to mean "everyone" (p. 29).

Because it appears that the demand for low-skilled and unskilled workers is drastically decreased, Strom's concept of quality within a framework of quantity is appropriate. What then is the obligation of the school to the potential drop out?

According to Daniel Schrieber (1965b):

One thing appears certain--if we are to keep all students in school, then all required courses must be designed and taught to meet all ability levels. Unless we can come nearer to this objective in practice, we will continue to have "built-in" standards of performance that will force some students out of school (p. 64).

This appears to the writer to synthesize Strom's statement concerning "the direct quality occurring within the framework of quantity."

Strom (1965b) also stated:

Up to now, educators have been more interested in what is taught students than in what students learn--the rationale follows that only the teacher could properly assess what advance students made. This idea is no longer tenable. The verb "educate" is not just transitive, it is also reflective, it is something that the child does to himself--a noetic

process. Part of being educated is to determine or to evaluate one's own advance--to know what one knows and what one needs to learn to satisfy one's self for mental well being. If knowledge is really subjective and therefore unique, it can best be evaluated by its possessor (p. 393).

These challenges to establish "the direct quality occurring within the framework of quantity" by Strom and to make education not something done to the student but something in which the student takes an active part are serious responsibilities which the educational system should accept.

Zeller (1966) maintains that an obvious solution adopted by some educators is to require students to remain in school until they graduate or to convince them to stay in school. Zeller (1966) states, "To persuade a drop out to return to school is not necessarily a solution if he returns to the same situation that he left" (p. 13).

Daniel Schrieber (1965a) concludes that "in a sense drop out is an intrinsic problem in a democratic society where the function and interest of public education is to provide an informed and responsible citizenry" (p. 148).

Martin Deutsch (1965) explains some implications involved for the democratic society.

A significance of school drop out and failure, apart from what it represents in lost potential to the individual and his community, is that when the children who failed become adults, they will be confined to the least skilled and least desirable jobs and will have almost no opportunity for upward social mobility (p. 320).

Historically the educational system has been geared to-

ward the white middle-class student. Deutsch (1965) states:

The white middle-class child is more likely to have been continuously prodded by his parents in the intellectual area, while being rewarded for correct answers. The lower-class child has, in the main, infrequently been subjected at home to the pressure arising from a formal adult-child learning situation. The middle-class child is likely to have experienced in the behavior of adults in his environment the essential ingredients implicit in the role of the teacher. For the lower-class child, relating to the teacher and school officials requires a new kind of behavior for which he has not been prepared (p. 322).

A review of the literature has indicated many and varied factors determining an individual's dropping out. According to Daniel Schrieber (1965a):

There are indications in a large majority of cases that drop out is not importantly determined even by the school process. That is, although drop out puts an emphatic end to a history of chronic academic failure, there is a sense in which many of these children never in effect, started school. Because the roots of their failure lie in the deprivation of their preschool failure, they come to school with nothing like the tools, the experiences, the self-security that five and six-year-old middle-class children possess. They do learn and know, as any one who stops to watch them play recognizes, but their learning styles are not those that the school is generally geared to (p. 155).

Deutsch and Schrieber are both saying that those not geared toward the middle-class school system will have a higher degree of difficulty in completing school than others who have been geared. Frank Riessman (1965) in his research discusses positive approaches to dealing with children not geared toward the white middle-class educational system. He suggests the following:

I think that a basic approach here has to be based on the culture of lower socio-economic groups and more particularly the elements of strength, the positives in this culture. The terms "deprived," "handicapped," "underprivileged," and "disadvantaged" unfortunately emphasize environmental limitations and ignore the positive efforts of low-income individuals to cope with their environment. Most approaches concerned with educating the disadvantaged child either overlook the positives entirely or merely mention in passing that there are positive features in the culture of low socio-economic groups that middle-class groups might learn from, but they do not spell out what these strengths are, and they build educational programs almost exclusively around the weaknesses or deficits (p. 312).

In 1967, Dr. Bowman of the Idaho State Department of Education conducted a study of drop outs and potential drop outs for the school year 1966-1967. He found that 121,759 pupils or 96.4% of the total statewide public school enrollment for grades 1-8 were included. Completed questionnaires were received from 112 of the 117 school districts in Idaho (96% of the total state enrollment) for grades 7-12. The following statistics are for grades 7-12.

1. 101 students dropped out due to physical illness
2. 88 students dropped out due to emotional illness
3. 729 students dropped out due to poor attendance
4. 463 students dropped out due to marriage or pregnancy
5. 284 students dropped out due to behavior difficulties
6. 561 students dropped out due to academic difficulties
7. 191 students dropped out due to parental influence
8. 162 students dropped out due to economic reasons
9. 350 students dropped out due to unknown reasons

10. 285 students dropped out due to "other" reasons

Some other significant results of this Idaho study were:

1. 378 (17%) were requested by school officials to leave school
2. 1,270 (54%) were boys, 1,010 (45%) were girls
3. 329 (14.6%) dropped out before reaching the age of sixteen; 506 (22.5%) dropped out while they were sixteen; and 603 (26.8%) dropped out when they were seventeen or older
4. 264 (17%) dropped out after being in the school district for only one year; 762 (49%) dropped out after being in a district for nine years or more
5. More students dropped out during the summer and the latter part of grading periods: 13.7% in the summer, 10.1% in October, 9.6% in January, and 7.5% in March
6. More pupils drop out during the eleventh grade (659 or 32%)
7. 77% of the drop outs scored average (90-115) or above (115 and over) on their last intelligence test
8. 383 (17%) of the drop outs had been retained in at least one grade for two or more years
9. 594 (29%) were reported to be at least one year below the reading level for their age on a standardized reading test

According to Bowman (1967) 9% of the total public school enrollment for grades 1-8 were reported as potential drop outs. Of this 9% (10,686) potential drop outs, 69.8% or

7,467 were reported to be having reading or academic difficulty; 28.1% or 3,008 lacked parental support to continue in school; and 22.3% or 2,388 had an emotional or physical disability which added to the possibility of dropping out in the future.

The Mexican-American Student

Mexican-Americans experience a high drop out rate. According to Peña (1975) nationally only 47% of Mexican-Americans between the ages of 25 and 29 have completed their secondary education. This percentage (47%) compares to 82% for all other races combined in the same age group of 25 to 29. Research by Gang (1973) states:

The number of Mexican-American students who leave school before completion of their education is noticeably higher than that of any other group. Non-attendance and irregular attendance incidence is higher among these students as compared with those of other racial backgrounds (p. 4).

Dolores Litsinger (1973) concludes:

Mexican-American students have one of the highest drop out rates of any minority group in the United States; a disproportionately large number of them are classified as mentally retarded, and those considered to be of normal intelligence often do not achieve academically but fall progressively behind other students as they move through the educational system; few Mexican-American students go to college. . . .The Mexican-American student is a challenge because he has qualities which result in specific educational and personality needs. He is unlike Anglos and other minority students, and he differs from students of similar economic status who have culturally different backgrounds (p. 2).

Thomas Carter (1970) suggests a breakdown of Litsinger's synthesis of the educational challenge offered by the Mexican-American student.

Searching for the reasons for the low school achievement and years of schooling of the Mexican-American minority has resulted in the isolation of three complex and interrelated sets of factors: (1) the nature of the diverse Mexican-American subcultures and the socialization afforded Mexican-American children, (2) the kind and quality of formal education available to Mexican-Americans; and (3) the nature of the local and regional social systems and the equal or unequal opportunity they afford the minority group (p. 207).

These three complex and interrelated factors seem to be conclusive in related research examined by the writer.

Takesian (1967) states:

The youngster who constantly faces negative situations in terms of academic failure and little encouragement, and who perceives himself as not "fitting in" as other students do, develops negative attitudes towards school. It appears, then, that the elementary school is the place where this youngster must be reached in order for him to experience a satisfying academic career which will continue to some successful terminal point (p. 2).

A review of the literature shows that responsibility for minority group conditions is demonstrated by many to lie within that minority group itself, thus denying this "satisfying academic career" by virtue of the culture.

Thomas Carter (1970) maintains:

It is easy to conclude that the cultural, social-class, or personality differences of "different" children faced with an undifferentiated or standard middle-class-oriented school, cause them to fail in school. Most educators

with the support of the vocal elements within the middle class assume the school is adequate and validly represents the core values and content of American culture. Therefore, it is not difficult to understand why school people, when given a choice between seeing Mexican-Americans' poor school performance as attributable to either their home or the nature of the school, readily opt to blame the deficient home (p. 208).

Dolores Escobar Litsinger (1973) suggests:

The dominant society and its institutions have sustained and prolonged conditions which trap minority groups. This is a disturbing, if not threatening idea. It is much easier to avoid conflict and guilt by assuming that the responsibility for success or failure lay with a minority group or the individuals who comprise it. . . . It has become apparent that no longer can the dominant society, the school, or educators as individuals enjoy the luxury of absolutism. . . . Many studies and investigations have clearly shown that the failure of the Mexican-American school child cannot be blamed on the pupil who cannot learn, the family that does not care, or the group that will not acculturate. Rather, such studies indicated that the educational establishment must assume a large share of the responsibility--teachers who are ineffective, the school system which is too slow to restructure itself to meet pupil's needs, the profession which has not developed adequate theory and teaching models (pp. 7-8).

The literature reviewed does show a growing concern about the Mexican-American student and his/her special needs. The high drop out rate presents a challenge that needs to be met and changed. According to Francisco García and Patrick Vaughan (1975):

A new focus in education came about as a result of the growing concern over the extremely high drop out rate of Mexican-American students. It was obvious that a sensitivity throughout the educational field had to be developed. A sensitivity that would recognize the internal changes

needed in the educational system, if we were ever to become a truly humanistic society (p. 2).

Dolores Litsinger (1973) further states:

Whether it is by necessity, circumstances, impositions, or choice, a Mexican-American culture exists, and schools are being asked to recognize this culture formally through curriculum content, educational programs, and instructional techniques. . . . Many Mexican-Americans and other minority groups are requesting public schools to educate toward cultural pluralism, rather than cultural conformity Educators are being asked to apply to minorities the democratic principle that each individual be developed to his highest potential so that he may enrich the general society. For many Mexican-Americans this potential includes an understanding of his heritage, command of the Spanish language, and the academic skills to assume leadership roles in adult society (p. 9).

Summary

The review of literature (Zeller, 1966) indicates a growing concern about the drop out problem. Robert D. Strom (1965a) asks for quality of education to occur within a framework of quantity. Daniel Schrieber (1965b) challenges the system to provide courses designed and taught to meet all ability levels. Zeller (1966) suggests that cooperation between all those involved in the system will help alleviate the drop out problem. Riessman (1965) states that those not geared to succeed in the white middle-class educational system can also succeed if their resources are tapped and properly channeled.

Dolores Litsinger (1973) concludes that the educational

institution itself must assume the responsibility for what has happened to the Mexican-American student--the student who is not geared to succeed within the white middle-class system.

She (Litsinger) cites the need for more effective teachers, for school systems which must restructure more quickly and for the teaching profession to develop more adequate teaching models and methods. She maintains that only when these needs are met will the Mexican-American student achieve within the system and not become a drop out statistic.

Education must be designed to meet the needs of all students. Robert D. Strom (1965a) suggests that "until drop outs are individually helped to succeed, schools will collectively fail" (p. 31).

CHAPTER III

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

Introduction

The study involves forty Mexican-Americans who have dropped out of schools in the Nampa School District #131 from 1971 to the present date. A questionnaire was designed and administered in the spring of 1976 to those who agreed to participate.

The questionnaire involved both demographic data and questions which solicited attitudes concerning school.

Population

School District #131 has two junior high schools, West and South, and Nampa Senior High School. Names were obtained from files made available by Nampa Senior High personnel. The drop out file had only been maintained since 1973. Approximately forty names with twenty-five addresses were found.

The writer received assistance from Mr. Raul Hunt, Nampa Bilingual Program Home Coordinator, who made his family files available. Approximately fifteen names and addresses were obtained.

The director of the G.E.D. program at the Nampa Community Center also made her student files available. Ten names were taken from this source.

Mr. Lorenzo Villarreal, South Junior High Counselor, also provided several names. Migrant Education Resource Center (MERC) personnel and Boise State Talent Search personnel made their files available.

One method employed by the writer in finding population for the study was to ask interviewees if they could provide any additional names of drop outs who met the required criteria.

There was no random selection of names. The writer visited every home where an address had been provided or found. Many potential interviewees were no longer at the address and had left no forwarding address. Many interviewees could not be found. Several persons refused to be interviewed.

Out of approximately sixty-five names and addresses found, forty persons were successfully contacted. These forty persons met the criteria of being Chicano, living within the boundaries of School District #131, and having dropped out of one of the schools within the district sometime between 1971 and the present time.

Development of the Questionnaire

A questionnaire was developed which included both personal history and questions regarding attitudes towards school. Several revisions were made. An effort was made to design the questionnaire in such a manner as to not cause un-

due anxiety, not offend the interviewee, and to be as explicit as possible.

The questionnaire was divided into three sections. Section One was a list of questions dealing with personal data such as name, age, number of persons in the family, schools attended, and family income. The second section dealt with attitudes concerning school such as feelings about school, involvement in school activities, and reasons for dropping out. Section Three involved open-ended questions concerning future outlook such as considering dropping out again if the person had it to do over again. The questionnaire is in the Appendix.

Procedure for Administering the Questionnaire

The writer went to each address without arranging for an appointment. Several follow-up visits were required on many of the potential interviewees due to difficulty in reaching them at home the first time.

The interviews ranged in length from fifteen minutes to forty-five minutes or longer. All interviewees were carefully assured of the reasons for the administration of the interview and of the confidentiality of any information offered. The participants were all extremely cooperative.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Introduction

The following chapter presents the findings and interpretations of the study. The results are provided according to (1) demographic findings, (2) school-related attitudes, and (3) future outlook. The statistical methods utilized in presenting the data are the mean, range, and frequency.

Table 2 and Table 13 demonstrate that a mean period of two years and three months has elapsed for males and one year and eleven months has elapsed for females from the time of dropping out to the time of the interview.

Demographic Data

Table 1 gives the breakdown of interviewees. Females slightly outnumber males. This should have no effect on the result of the study.

TABLE 1
SEX OF INTERVIEWEES

	Number of Interviewees
Male	17
Female	23

In Table 2 both groups are fairly well matched in terms of present age. There appears to be little difference in mean and range in both groups.

TABLE 2
PRESENT AGE OF INTERVIEWEES

	Mean	Range
Male	18½ years	15 - 23 years
Female	18 years	16 - 21 years

Table 3 (Number in Family) reflects a higher mean and range for males than females.

TABLE 3
NUMBER IN FAMILY (Including Parents)

	Mean	Range
Male	10.9	8 - 17
Female	8.7	3 - 16

Table 4 (Educational Level of Mother) shows a higher mean and wider range for females.

TABLE 4
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF PARENTS (Mother)

	Mean	Range
Male	3.5	0 - 8
Female	8.9	0 - 12

The educational level of father (Table 5) appears to be similar between male and female interviewees.

TABLE 5
EDUCATIONAL LEVEL OF PARENTS (Father)

	Mean	Range
Male	3.9	0 - 11
Female	3.43	0 - 12

Table 6 (Times Moved in the Past Ten Years) presents a similarity between the mean and the range of both groups.

TABLE 6
TIMES MOVED IN THE PAST TEN YEARS

	Mean	Range
Male	2.35	0 - 10
Female	1.34	0 - 7

Number of schools attended (Table 7) shows very little difference in mean and range between male and female.

TABLE 7
NUMBER OF SCHOOLS ATTENDED (Including Nampa)

	Mean	Range
Male	4.05	3 - 7
Female	4.43	3 - 7

The present occupations are listed in Table 8.

TABLE 8
PRESENT OCCUPATION

	Male	Female
Unemployed	4	9
Fieldworker	4	3
Student (Link's School of Business)	1	0
Teacher's Aide	1	0
Meridian Wood (Unskilled worker)	1	0
Fleetwood Trailer Factory (Unskilled worker)	2	0
Processing Plants (Unskilled worker)	3	3
Apprentice Brickmason	1	0
Window Maker	0	1
Idaho Migrant Council (C.E.T.A.)	0	4
Waitress	0	1
Housewife	0	1
Social Security (C.E.T.A.)	0	1

There appears to be a difference in the mean and range of present salaries of both groups. Males are earning approximately one dollar per hour more than female interviewees.

TABLE 9
PRESENT SALARY OF THOSE CURRENTLY EMPLOYED

	Mean	Range
Male	\$3.13 per hour	\$2.30 - \$4.32 per hour
Female	\$2.37 per hour	\$2.10 - \$3.48 per hour

The mean number of siblings older and younger (Table 10) holds very little difference between males and females.

TABLE 10
MEAN NUMBER OF SIBLINGS OLDER AND YOUNGER

	Older	Younger
Male	3.5	4.8
Female	2.7	4.4

Table 11 (Income of Family When Student Dropped Out) indicates a larger mean for male interviewees. The income range for female interviewees is somewhat wider.

TABLE 11
INCOME OF FAMILY WHEN STUDENT DROPPED OUT
(Student Estimation Only)
(Not All Incomes Were Known)

	Mean	Range
Male (16 were given)	\$6,629	\$4,200 - \$11,000
Female (19 were given)	\$4,823	\$3,000 - \$14,000

There appears to be more Spanish spoken in the homes of male interviewees (Table 12) than in those of females and more English spoken in the homes of females. More Spanish and English is spoken in the homes of female interviewees.

TABLE 12

"WHAT LANGUAGE/LANGUAGES ARE SPOKEN AT HOME?"

	Male	Female
Spanish	10	6
English	1	6
Spanish/English	6	11

School-Related Attitudes

The mean and range of age at dropping out (Table 13) of both groups of interviewees is almost identical.

TABLE 13

AGE AT DROPPING OUT

	Mean	Range
Male	16.3 years	14 - 20 years
Female	16.1 years	14 - 19 years

Grades being achieved at time of dropping out (Table 14) appear to be somewhat higher for females than for males.

TABLE 14

GRADES AT DROP OUT (Student Estimation)
(More Than One Possible Grade Given)

	A	B	C	D	F
Male	1	4	12	6	2
Female	4	10	16	5	3

Table 15 (Number of Close Friends in School) indicates a close mean between both groups. The range for females is wider.

TABLE 15

NUMBER OF CLOSE FRIENDS IN SCHOOL

	Mean	Range
Male	8.1	0 - 15
Female	7.1	0 - 20

The number of close friends who dropped out (Table 16) presents an almost identical mean between both groups of interviewees. The range for females is somewhat wider.

TABLE 16

NUMBER OF CLOSE FRIENDS WHO DROPPED OUT

	Mean	Range
Male	2.5	0 - 8
Female	3	1 - 12

In Table 17 (Prejudice Felt From Other Students) it appears that a larger number in both groups answered negatively rather than positively.

TABLE 17
PREJUDICE FELT FROM OTHER STUDENTS

	Yes	No
Male	3	14
Female	7	16

More responses were given by females for examples of how prejudice was demonstrated by other students (Table 18) than by males.

TABLE 18
"HOW WAS PREJUDICE FROM OTHER STUDENTS DEMONSTRATED?"

	Male	Female
Dress		1
Attitude	2	6
Caused trouble for the student	1	1

Over half of both groups had felt no prejudice from the teachers (Table 19).

TABLE 19
PREJUDICE FELT FROM TEACHERS

	Yes	No
Male	6	11
Female	10	13

More examples of how or by whom prejudice from teachers was demonstrated (Table 20) were given by female interviewees.

TABLE 20
HOW OR BY WHOM PREJUDICE DEMONSTRATED
(One or More Possible Answers)

	Male	Female
Not enough help (explanations) given	2	7
Separation of Chicanos in a classroom		1
Hateful toward student		1
Teacher admitted dislike of Chicano students		1
Could not afford gym shorts so P.E. teacher made an issue of it		1
Snubbed by teachers		1
Unfair discipline		2
Not enough make-up time given		1
Principal		1
Fair chances not given by teachers	2	

Table 21 ("How Did You Feel About School?") gives a list of attitudes expressed by the interviewees.

TABLE 21
 "HOW DID YOU FEEL ABOUT SCHOOL?"

	Male	Female
O.K.	4	4
Liked it	5	11
O.K. until high school	1	
Grades were going down	1	1
It got boring	1	
O.K., but didn't learn much	2	2
Didn't like it	2	2
Didn't like the way treated	1	1
Didn't care		2

Fourteen females and five males were not involved in extracurricular activities.

TABLE 22
 "WHAT WERE SOME OF THE THINGS IN WHICH YOU
 WERE INVOLVED?"
 (More Than One Answer Possible)

	Male	Female
Bilingual club	3	6
None	5	14
Track	3	3
Drill team		1
Wrestling		
Football	5	
Basketball	1	
Discus/Shot put	1	
Baseball	2	

Table 23 lists the subjects most enjoyed by both groups of interviewees.

TABLE 23

"WHAT SUBJECT DID YOU LIKE BEST?"
(More Than One Possible Answer)

	Male	Female
World History	2	
Reading	1	
Sports (P.E.)	2	1
Math	4	6
Shop	1	
Art	1	1
Bilingual	1	3
English	1	7
Sociology	1	
Social Studies	1	1
All	1	
Drama	1	1
History	1	
Biology		2
Typing		1
Algebra		1

A list of subjects enjoyed least by the interviewees is given in Table 24.

TABLE 24

"WHAT SUBJECT DID YOU LIKE LEAST?"
(More Than One Possible Answer)

	Male	Female
History		2
Math	3	3
Science	2	10
English	7	5
Social Studies	2	1
P.E.		1
Typing		1
Bilingual		1
Biology	1	
None	1	
Physics	1	
Reading	2	

Females gave more positive responses in Table 25 which concerned feelings about teacher/counselor concern. Fourteen interviewees felt the teacher/counselor was not interested in them.

TABLE 25

"DID YOU FEEL THAT THE TEACHERS/COUNSELORS
WERE INTERESTED IN YOU?"

	Male	Female
Yes	6	8
Not really	1	
One was	4	7
No	6	7
They had to be		1

Eleven of the twenty-three females and ten of the seventeen males felt free to talk over problems with a teacher/counselor (Table 26).

TABLE 26

"DID YOU FEEL FREE TO TALK OVER PROBLEMS
WITH TEACHERS/COUNSELORS?"

	Male	Female
Yes	10	11
No	7	12

Thirteen of the twenty-three females and eleven of the seventeen males (Table 27) felt there were specific problems which they didn't feel free to talk over with a teacher/

counselor.

TABLE 27

"WERE THERE ANY PROBLEMS YOU DIDN'T FEEL FREE
TO TALK OVER WITH TEACHERS/COUNSELORS?"

	Male	Female
Yes	11	13
No	6	10

Among the highest ranking reasons for dropping out that were given by the interviewees (Table 28) were the need to work and the loss of interest on the part of the interviewees.

TABLE 28

"WHY DID YOU DROP OUT?"
(More Than One Possible Answer)

	Male	Female
Lack of credits	1	1
Sickness		3
Needed at home		1
Poor grades		2
Poor attitude to school		2
To get married	1	3
Needed to work	5	4
Pregnancy		3
Teacher attitudes		1
Not want to wear glasses		1
Saw no progress	1	1
Truant/expelled	1	
Wanted to work on G.E.D.	1	
Personal problems	2	
Tired of school	2	
Didn't have right clothes	1	1
Lost interest	4	2
Unfair discipline	1	
Didn't like school	1	

A larger number of females than males were never retained in an elementary grade. A larger number of male interviewees were retained in first grade.

TABLE 29

"WERE YOU EVER RETAINED?"
(More Than One Possible Answer)

	Male	Female
No	5	13
Kindergarten		1
First grade	11	6
Second grade	2	
Third grade		3
Fourth grade		1

In Table 30 ("How Did Your Family Feel About Your Dropping Out?") it appears that the most frequent response given by both male and female interviewees was that the decision had been their own.

TABLE 30

"HOW DID YOUR FAMILY FEEL ABOUT
YOUR DROPPING OUT?"

	Male	Female
Own decision	10	14
Didn't like the idea		5
Badly	3	2
Knew student had to help support family	2	2
O.K.	1	
Angry	1	

In Table 31 ("Did Someone Talk to You About Dropping Out?") a list of persons who might have spoken to the inter-

viewees is presented. The fact that a number of the interviewees did not return to school in September is evident. This was not substantiated by the writer's inquiry into school records. It was recorded as a response given by the interviewee.

TABLE 31

"DID SOMEONE TALK TO YOU ABOUT DROPPING OUT?"
(More Than One Possible Answer)

	Male	Female
No	4	6
Everybody	1	
Didn't return in September	5	6
No one knew	1	1
Principal		1
Counselor	4	6
Teacher	1	2
Vice-Principal	1	
Suspended, never returned		1
Just left without notifying		1

Future Outlook

A large number of both groups showed no future occupational plans (Table 32).

TABLE 32

"DID YOU HAVE ANY PLANS FOR A
FUTURE OCCUPATION?"

	Male	Female
No	8	9
Army		1
Stewardess		2
Secretary		6
Nurse		1
P.E. teacher		1
Drama		1
Art		1
Just finish high school		1
Mechanics	3	
Forestry	1	
Accountant	1	
Teacher	1	
Pilot	1	
Lawyer	1	

Table 33 lists educational possibilities for those who had made future plans. A large number of interviewees had thought about a future college education.

TABLE 33

"HOW WERE YOU GOING TO PREPARE FOR
THIS FUTURE OCCUPATION?"
(Not All Had Future Plans)

	Male	Female
Finish high school		1
College	6	4
Business School		4
More school		4
Experience	1	
Trade School	2	

Table 34 which deals with possible changes which might have been made while the student was still in school is comprised of an extensive list of responses.

TABLE 34

"IF YOU COULD HAVE CHANGED SOMETHING IN SCHOOL,
WHAT WOULD IT HAVE BEEN?"
(More Than One Possible Answer)

	Male	Female
Better teacher attitude	4	6
Nothing	7	4
Shorter classes	1	
More free time	1	2
More classes/activities for Chicanos	1	2
More teachers to care about their students	1	1
Have an assembly on equality	1	1
Better explanation of subject matter	1	1
Different teachers	1	1
Less prejudice in the school	1	
To be treated equally		1
More teacher trust		1
Spanish for native speakers		1
Better P.E. regulations		1
Replace prejudiced teachers		2
Been able to do school work at home		2
More Chicano teachers		1
Less free time		1
Better administrator attitudes		1

In Table 35 a large number of female interviewees would not drop out again if they had it to do over.

TABLE 35
 "WOULD YOU DROP OUT IF YOU HAD IT
 TO DO OVER AGAIN?"

	Male	Female
No	8	20
If there were different teachers, no		1
It depends if the situation were different	4	1
Yes	5	1

Summary

The survey findings revealed that 17 males and 23 females were involved in the study (Table 1). The survey was taken approximately two years after the interviewees had dropped out of school. The mean age at dropping out was 16.3 for males and 16.1 for females (Table 13).

Nine of the forty participants indicated the reason for dropping out was the need to work (Table 28). The need to assist at home was indicated once. Nineteen responded with school-related reasons for dropping out. Two reported they lacked sufficient credits and four reported poor grades or no progress. Most prevalent of school-related reasons was the fact that eight interviewees lost interest or were tired of school. Only one reported truancy as the reason for leaving and one felt unfair discipline was the reason for leaving.

Fifteen responded that they had personal reasons, marriage, pregnancy, and sickness (Table 28). However,

twenty-eight indicated they liked school (Table 21).

Twenty-four reported having been retained in grades K through four (Table 29). Fifteen of the respondents indicated that a school-related person spoke with them about dropping out. Sixteen responded they felt prejudice from teachers (Table 19), whereas ten said they felt prejudice from other students. Nine interviewees indicated they felt the teachers were most unfair by not providing enough teaching assistance. Eight reported that teachers held negative attitudes or were unfair to them in discipline or academic-related matters (Table 20).

Twenty-five felt a teacher/counselor was interested in them. However, fourteen indicated they felt that the teacher/counselor was not interested (Table 25). Nineteen felt they were not free to talk over problems with the teacher/counselor (Table 26).

Eighteen responded that if they could have changed something in school (Table 34), it would have related to teachers. Five reported they would drop out again if they had it to do over. Twenty-eight reported they would not drop out again (Table 35). Seventeen reported they had no future job plans.

The two groups of interviewees who participated in the survey appear to be quite similar. Some differences between the groups may have occurred as a result of the females being more verbal. Because the mean, range, and frequency were

the only statistical methods utilized, no significant analytical findings were recorded.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

It is well documented that Mexican-American children have not achieved the same academic success as have their Anglo peers. Educators always have been confronted with the drop out problem, but as a result of the inequities which have always existed within the educational structure; the Mexican-American has had the highest drop out rate.

This study was undertaken as an effort to determine some of the causes for the high drop out rate of Chicano students in Nampa School District #131.

A questionnaire was used as a survey instrument. It was conducted of forty Mexican-Americans who had dropped out of some school in the Nampa District within the last five years 1971-1976 and who resided within the boundaries of School District #131.

The survey results were tabulated according to mean, range, and frequency. The results suggest that the two groups of interviewees appear to be quite similar.

Conclusions

1. Those who participated in the study were most cooperative and expressed both interest and concern about dealing with the current Chicano drop out problem in Nampa.

2. Some interviewees appeared surprised that someone would ask for their opinions concerning a school situation.

3. The educational level of the parents of both male and female interviewees appears to be low. This may be indicative in some cases of a cycle of dropping out which may possibly be continued in the next generation.

4. Present occupations of interviewees reveal a high incidence of unemployment and of basically unskilled types of labor.

5. The salaries of those currently employed is indicative in many cases of the low level of job skills. The women earn seven cents over the minimum wage on the average, while the men earn eighty-three cents over the minimum wage on the average.

6. The income of many families of the interviewees at the time of their dropping out was extremely low. In many situations it was easy to see why the interviewee dropped out to supplement family income at whatever job was available, for the most part, unskilled labor.

7. It is interesting to note that for the most part, average grades (according to the students because no school records were checked) were being earned by the interviewees at the time of dropping out.

8. The fact that more prejudice was felt from teachers than from students indicated some interesting facts. Many of the interviewees definitely felt that some treatment by a

teacher/counselor had some bearing on their dropping out. The writer felt this to be highly significant.

9. The fact that twenty-eight out of forty interviewed liked school indicated to the writer that something definitely had gone wrong to precipitate their dropping out. It seems a contradiction that they did go ahead and drop out if they liked it (school).

10. Something of significance was the fact that nineteen out of forty were not involved in extracurricular activities. This seems to indicate that activities were closed in some manner to Mexican-Americans, that no one bothered to encourage them to participate, that there were not enough activities to appeal to the Mexican-American student, or that the interviewees just lacked the interest to join.

11. The fact that fourteen interviewees felt that the teacher/counselor was not interested in them and that nineteen felt they were not free to talk over problems with a teacher/counselor is a factor that should not be looked at lightly. Perhaps a lack of sincerity or of empathy on the part of the teacher/counselor was felt by the interviewee and this prohibited any feeling of confidence that might have been shared.

12. The need to work was cited frequently as a reason for dropping out. How many alternatives could have been found to prevent this from happening and for supplementing the family income?

13. Loss of interest also ranked high as a reason for dropping out. There are many reasons for this loss to occur and as many for preventing or remediating the situation. All of this loss of interest did not occur just before the student dropped out. In many cases it had been gradually building up for many years in the form of continual failure. Why was it not spotted earlier?

14. That twenty-four out of forty interviewees reported they had been retained in grades K through four was highly significant. Most that were retained reported they had been because of the lack of ability of speaking English. This was not documented by reviewing school records. If this was the case, why was not the situation handled so that the student had not had to repeat a grade? This easily could have begun the cycle of failure needlessly. A bilingual program could have easily dealt with these students so that they would have become bilingual in both Spanish and English.

15. Twenty-four interviewees indicated that dropping out had been their own decision. Someone looking at this superficially might conclude that they had not wanted to stay in school at all under any circumstances. The writer found this to not be the situation, for example, the need for many to work, the loss of interest (many times not their own fault), and personal reasons. Twenty-eight out of forty liking school still indicates that more liked school than didn't.

16. The writer found in many situations that there was no follow-up by school personnel when one of the interviewees dropped out. This indicated a lack of interest and commitment to education on the part of school personnel.

17. The fact that seventeen of the interviewees had no future career plans indicates a failure on the part of the system somewhere along the line to promote career awareness. The writer wonders if some may not have dropped out if some alternatives had been laid out for them in terms of future job possibilities, job training, and lifetime earnings.

18. Only twenty-two had any kind of future educational plans. This again shows failure on the part of the system to perhaps have indicated job training possibilities whether in the form of trade schools, colleges, business schools, or any other educational facilities.

19. Of great importance is the fact that eighteen responded with changing something related to teachers if they had the choice of what to change in school. There appears to have been a failure to communicate positively on the part of the teachers and interviewees, either by omission or commission. This was not a good indication of what kind of interaction may have occurred.

Recommendations

1. The mean age for dropping out was sixteen years. It is the opinion of the writer that more effort must be

made to work with potential drop outs before they reach that age. When a student enters junior high seems to be an appropriate time to do some screening and "preventive" education.

2. There does seem to exist some prejudice in the schools both on the part of the student and from teachers/counselors towards Chicano students. The Bilingual Program has made excellent beginnings to educate the students, faculties, and administrators of School District #131. Hopefully, individual principals and administrators will continue to support and implement this program.

3. More Chicano students need to be encouraged to participate in extracurricular activities. Self-concept enters the picture in these situations and it must be worked with to the most positive outcome possible.

4. Many teachers and counselors have made a concerted effort to show interest and concern in the Mexican-American student. It is the hope of the writer that many more will also begin to feel empathy but not paternalism, and concern but not fear or dislike of the Mexican-American student.

5. The list of responses of reasons for dropping out is extensive. In this writer's opinion many of the negative attitudes or other reasons might have been screened out and dealt with before they caused the student to drop out.

6. More follow-up or "preventive" measures might have been taken to help prevent the student from dropping out.

7. Because of the limitations faced by the writer in doing this study, there is still a great need for more research to be done concerning the Mexican-American drop out, specifically in District #131.

8. Because of the average low educational level of the parents, the writer feels it is critical to involve more of the parents in some manner in their children's education so that they may understand the value of their children completing their education.

9. Home-school liaison can be critical in many home situations of potential drop outs. Concern must be developed and maintained from both sides. The present position funded through the Bilingual Program should be maintained at the cost of other components of the Program.

10. There appeared to be very little career education, although programs are changing and it is now being introduced in the schools. This may be critical for potential drop outs.

11. G.E.D. opportunities should continue to be made available. Two interviewees have obtained their G.E.D. and ten are studying for it. Many did not know of such an existing program. More publicity should be given to this program.

12. Jobs to supplement family income were of a concern to many interviewees and the cause for some to drop out. Some students can now work for the Bilingual Program and stay in school, but more of these types of jobs must be pro-

vided to help alleviate this concern of students and enable them to graduate.

13. The District must be congratulated in its efforts and success at hiring Mexican-American certified personnel and Bilingual Specialists. Their efforts should be continued in this matter. It is essential that Mexican-American students have Mexican-American teacher models.

14. There can be nothing but the highest praise given to the Nampa School District and their Bilingual Program for the strides they have made to make the education of all children, specifically the Mexican-American student more relevant. The writer urges that continued efforts be made in this direction for the continued benefit of all students. Hopefully the drop out rate of Chicano students will fall and perhaps someday be negligible.

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APPENDIX A
DROP OUT QUESTIONNAIRE

Name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____ Present Age _____

Last grade completed _____ Age at dropping out _____

What kind of grades did you have when you dropped out?

How many persons are there in your family? _____

How many are older? _____

How many are younger? _____

What was your family's income when you dropped out? _____

How many years of schooling did your mother have? _____

How many years of schooling did your father have? _____

Have you moved in the last ten years? If so, where? _____

What schools have you attended? _____

What is your present occupation? _____

What is your present salary? _____

* * * * *

How many close friends did you have in school?

Did any of them drop out?

Did you feel any prejudice from other students while you were in school? How was it expressed?

Did you feel any prejudice from any teachers while you were in school? How was it expressed?

What language/languages are spoken in your home?

How did you feel about school?

What were some of the things in school in which you were involved?

What subject did you like best? Least?

Did you feel that the teachers/counselors were interested in you?

Did you feel free to talk over any problems about school with a teacher or a counselor?

Were there any problems (school) that you did not feel free to talk over with a teacher or a counselor?

Were you ever retained?

Why did you drop out?

How did your family feel about your dropping out?

Did someone--a teacher or a counselor--talk with you when you were considering dropping out?

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Did you have plans for a future occupation while you were in school?

How were you planning on preparing for this occupation?

If you could have changed something in school, what would it have been?

Would you drop out again if you had it to do over?

APPENDIX B

MIGRATION PATTERNS OF INTERVIEWEES

